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TAGS: [CPAS](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PINR](#) [KHLs](#) [MO](#)
SUBJECT: MOROCCO BEGINS ISSUANCE OF BIOMETRIC PASSPORTS

REF: A. 09 RABAT 370
[B](#). 09 STATE 032287

Classified By: Economic Counselor Michael DeTar, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)
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[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Ref A provided information about official Moroccan documents, noting that the Government of Morocco (GOM) intended to introduce biometric technology to Moroccan passports. Introduction of the biometric passports, however, was delayed through 2009. The Morocco Ministry of Interior (MOI) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MFA) announced on January 18 that a limited number of Moroccan local passport issuance jurisdictions as well as overseas consulates had begun to issue biometric passports on a trial basis. The GOM anticipates that all passport issuance authorities will issue biometric passports by March 2010. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) Although the GOM had initially hoped to introduce biometric passports by the end of 2008, introduction was repeatedly delayed through 2008 and 2009. On January 18, the MOI and MFA announced that a limited number of provinces and prefectures in Morocco and overseas consulates had begun to issue biometric passports on a pilot basis. (Note: Prefectures are urban local jurisdictions and Provinces are the equivalent-level rural local jurisdiction. An MOI Administrative Annex in each prefecture or province issues official government documents, including passports, to citizens. End Note.) In the first phase of the pilot, the prefectures of Sale and Skhirat-Temara, both in the Rabat metropolitan area, and the consulate in Colombe, France had started biometric passport issuance on December 15, 2009.

[1](#)3. (U) Starting the week of January 18, biometric passport issuance was extended to an additional 14 Moroccan prefectures/provinces (out of Morocco's 61 total) and 6 consulates. The 14 prefectures are Rabat, Kenitra, Mohammedia, Sidi Kacem, Khemisset, Mediouna, Nouacer, Ben Slimane, Sidi El Bernoussi, Ben Msik, Ain Sebaa Hay Mohammadi, Hay Moulay Rachid, Chichaoua and El Fahs Anjra. The consulates that began issuing biometric passports are Paris, Toulouse, Utrecht, Liege, Palermo and Bilbao. The MOI and MFA announced that all provinces/prefects, embassies and consulates will issue biometric passports starting March 2010.

Procedures for Passport Issuance

[1](#)4. (U) Moroccan passport issuance practices authorize issuance of a biometric passport upon the applicant's submission of an application form, fee stamp, and photocopy

of the bearer's valid biometric national identity card (CIN). Morocco began issuing biometric CINs in 2008; previous versions of the CIN do not contain biometric identifiers. If the applicant does not possess a biometric CIN, the issuing agency will issue a biometric passport upon evidence (in the form of an official receipt) that the applicant has already applied for his/her biometric CIN, along with the applicant's birth certificate and proof of residency from a local government unit.

15. (U) The passport application form is completed through an on-line application, and then printed for submission to the MOI Administrative Annex or Consulate. The passport officials then transmit the application electronically to Dar As-Sikkah, the mint of the Moroccan Central Bank, which prints the actual passport booklets. The finished documents are returned to the prefecture/province or consulate officials for delivery to the applicant through certified mail.

16. (U) Although the MOI and MFA anticipate that all regular full-validity passports issued after March 2010 will be biometric passports, Moroccan passport authorities will continue to issue limited validity, 12-month passports that do not contain biometric identifiers or embedded chips in emergency situations.

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